



**First Church of Christ in Mansfield  
(Congregational) United Church of Christ**

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All the Members, Ministers

Rev. Joseph Blotz, Pastor + Erik Haeger, Organist

Olivia Russell, Worship Circle Coordinator

**THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS + FEBRUARY 27, 2022**

**Welcome to Our Guests!**

*We're delighted you have joined us for worship; the members are the ministers of this church...  
if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask us!*

**Playing the Chimes and Prelude**

**Greeting and Welcome**

The Reverend Doctor Benjamin Franklin Chavis, Jr., was born in 1948 in Oxford, North Carolina, into a long and distinguished line of preachers and teachers.

His first political act came when he was a wide-eyed 13 year old. On his way home from school each day, Chavis would pass a whites-only library in Oxford, North Carolina. One day, tired of tattered hand-me-downs and desirous of a book with two intact covers on it, he boldly walked into the library. The librarians told him to leave, but he questioned that demand. "He asked why," a childhood friend told the New York Times. "A lot of us when we were told to go away ... would just do so, but Ben would always challenge, always ask why." The librarians called his parents, but the incident, like the spunkiness of the boy at its center, could not be calmed, and tempers flared. In a short time, the library was opened to all races. A child's simple act of disobedience and intellectual curiosity had shattered the overt racism of an institution whose sole mission, young Chavis knew, should have been the enrichment of minds—those of blacks and whites.

In 1968—the year of King's assassination —Chavis became a field officer for the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice. The Commission, organized in 1963 in response to the assassination of civil rights activist Medgar Evers and the infamous Birmingham, Alabama, church bombing, coordinated racial justice strategies for national and regional organizations and spear-headed community organization and criminal justice campaigns.

In February of 1971, Chavis was in Wilmington, North Carolina, to drum up support for a school desegregation lawsuit that had been brought by the NAACP. On a night of racial violence, Mike's Grocery, a white-owned store in a black part of town, was firebombed. A year later, the Wilmington 10 (as the nine black men, including Chavis, and one white woman came to be known) were convicted of arson and conspiracy and sentenced to a

combined total of 282 years in prison, with the lengthiest term, 34 years, imposed on Chavis.

The case immediately garnered worldwide attention and became focus of the civil rights movement in the United States. Defense attorneys cited 2,685 errors in the trial, but appeals were denied. A year later, Amnesty International listed the ten as political prisoners.

While in prison, Chavis was frequently escorted in leg irons and handcuffs to Duke University, where he earned a master's degree from the divinity school under a study-release program.

The Wilmington 10 case took a dramatic turn when three principal prosecution witnesses from the trial admitted they had made up their stories after being pressured by local law enforcement authorities. North Carolina governor James Hunt reduced the sentences but left the convictions intact. Finally in 1980, after Chavis and the other activists had been paroled, a Justice Department investigation led to a federal appellate court's reversal of the convictions. "Our case was a victory for the whole movement," Chavis noted in Newsweek. "It showed people what is possible."

In 1983, two years after receiving his doctorate in divinity from Howard University, Chavis returned to the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice as deputy director.

By 1985, Chavis had been elected executive director of the commission and became most associated with the burgeoning environmental movement, coining the term "environmental racism,"

"One of the responsibilities of the civil rights movement is to define the postmodern manifestations of racism," Chavis explained in Ebony. "We must not only point to overt forms of racism, but also to institutionalized racism."

Rev. Dr. Chavis continues to work and preach for liberation, racial and environmental justice.

Let us give thanks for the witness and ministry of Rev. Dr. Ben Chavis

**Opening Hymn**

*Immortal Invisible God Only Wise*

CH66

**Confessing our Brokenness and Opening Prayer**

Hear these words from Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians: Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with

unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God.

When in this past week have lost heart?

When have we been cunning or bent God's word to our own will?

*silence*

**Eternal God, you revealed to the disciples the everlasting glory of Jesus. Grant us, who have not seen and yet believe, the gift of your Holy Spirit, that we may boldly live the gospel and shine with your transforming glory, as people changed and changing through the redeeming presence of our Savior. Amen.**

### Song of Praise

Paul Vasile

Glo-ry to God, whose good-ness shines one me, and to the Christ, whose grace has  
end, world with-out end, A - men. World with-out end, world with-out  
par - doned me, and to the Spir - it, whose love has set me free! As it  
end, A - men. World with-out e - nd, world with-out end, A - men.  
was in the be-gin-ning, is now and ev-er shall be, A - men World with-out men!

### Hebrew Scripture

Exodus 34:29-35

Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke

with them. Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; but whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

## **Psalter**

## **Psalm 99**

God reigns; let the people tremble;

God is enthroned upon the cherubim, let the earth shake.

**God is great in Zion and is high above all peoples.**

Let them confess God's Name, which is great and awesome; God is the Holy One.

**"O mighty Ruler, lover of justice, you have established equity;  
you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob."**

We proclaim your greatness, O God, and fall down before your footstool;  
you are the Holy One.

**Moses and Aaron among your priests, and Samuel among those who  
call upon your Name, they called upon you, and you answered them.**

You spoke to them out of the pillar of cloud; they kept your testimonies  
and the decree that you gave them.

**"O Holy God, you answered them indeed;  
you were a God who forgave them, yet punished them for their evil  
deeds."**

Proclaim the greatness of our God and worship on God's holy hill,  
**for our God is the Holy One.**

## **Gospel**

## **Luke 9:28-43a**

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" -- not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" When the voice had spoken, Jesus was

found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

## Reflection

### **Prayers of the People and the Prayer of Jesus**

For the Church: that the wisdom of God may enlighten our words and actions so that our deepest identity as children of God may be manifest

For a re-centering of our lives during the coming Lenten season: that God's grace will guide us to love God more fully and to love our neighbors as we do ourselves so that we may live forever Christ's new resurrected life

For Peace: that God will guide world leaders in diffusing international tensions and help them to work together to end famine, disease, and lack of educational opportunities

For a healing of the wounds of racism and discrimination: that God will heal those who have been wounded by racism and open new opportunities for them to share their gifts and enrich society

For refugees and displaced persons: that God will protect them from harm and mistreatment, guide them to places of safety, and help them find acceptance in new communities

For all who are ill: that the Spirit will bring healing to all burdened with illness, restore them to their activities and responsibilities, and help them to be strengthened through the care and companionship of family and friends

For all struggling with addictions: that God will free them from all that holds them bound and help them find the resources that will help them restore their life

For all who have died: that they may share in Christ's defeat of death and be clothed in the new life of the resurrection

*Please pray the Prayer of Jesus in whatever language is most comfortable for you.*

*The following are offered as examples...*

**Our Father/Mother/Creator,  
who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our debts/sins/trespases,  
as we forgive our debtors/those who sin/trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Musical Offering**

*Hand it Over*

Keb'Mo'

*Offerings may be placed in passed plates, mailed to:  
First Church of Christ in Mansfield UCC.*

*Box 36. Mansfield Center, CT 06250, or given online at [www.myfcc.info](http://www.myfcc.info)*

**Doxology**

Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow; Praise God all crea - tures here be low; Praise  
5 God for all that love has done: Cre - a - tor, Christ and Spi - rit, One. A - men!

**Prayer of Dedication**

**Holy God, we give you thanks for the diverse gifts you have bestowed upon us. Bless us with your Spirit that they may be used to proclaim your good news in word and deed. Amen.**

**Hymn**

*Alleluia Sing to Jesus*

CH233

**Benediction**

**The Week Ahead...**

Sunday, February 27

10:15am Worship and Worship Circle

Monday, February 28  
Center

10am First Church leads Worship at St Joseph Living

Tuesday, March 1

7pm Prayers at the End of the Day on Facebook

Wednesday, March 2                    11am-1pm Open Office Hours  
                                                  1pm Book Group in Fellowship Hall  
                                                  7pm Ash Wednesday Worship

Thursday, February 24                7pm Music Ministry

Sunday, February March 6            10:15am Worship and Worship Circle

**Each year, First Church partners with Church World Service to purchase and assemble 50 Health Kits** which are then sent around the world to people in need. In the face of natural disasters, violence, or grinding poverty, health kits can mean the difference between sickness and health for struggling families. This year, we need to collect:

40 hand towels

41 washcloths

39 individually wrapped/boxed bars of soap

36 individually packaged toothbrushes

42 nail clippers

440 1" band-aides

37 wide tooth combs (not picks or pocket combs but similar to these)

A basket will be placed in front of our Welcome (Communion) Table where offerings can be placed. They may also be left, in a bag and labeled, on the bench outside of the Brown's Rd. entrance to the church.

**Our Blessing Box** is in need of small, individually packaged cereal... if you could pick some up during your next grocery run, it would be appreciated!

First Church of Christ in Mansfield is excited to announce a delicious way to support our church - through our annual **Easter candy fundraiser!** We will be fundraising with Munson's Chocolates from 2/15/2022 through 3/4/2021. Payment is not due until you receive your order and may be in the form of cash or check. Candy is expected after March 31.